

Message Text

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43

ACTION INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINR TU IT

SUBJECT: BIO INFO ON SEMIH AKBIL, NEW TURKISH AMBASSADOR
TO ITALY

1. ALTHOUGH THE APPOINTMENT OF SEMIH AKBIL AS AMBASSADOR
TO ITALY HAS YET TO BE CONFIRMED BY PUBLICATION IN THE
OFFICIAL GAZETTA, OUR FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES REGARD CON-
FIRMATION AS ASSURED. WE ARE THEREFORE PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING
BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

A. THIS WILL BE AKBIL'S FIRST AMBASSADORIAL ASSIGNMENT. IT
FOLLOWS FIVE VERY ACTIVE YEARS AS THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S
SPOKESMAN.

B. BORN IN 1927 IN ANKARA, AKBIL GRADUATED FROM THE LAW
FACULTY OF ANKARA UNIVERSITY AND ENTERED THE FOREIGN MINISTRY
IN 1952. HIS FIRST TWO FOREIGN POSTS WERE LONDON (1954-57) AND
WASHINGTON (1957-61). RETURNING TO ANKARA IN 1961, HE SERVED
IN SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS OF THE MINISTRY BEFORE BECOMING STAFF
AIDE TO THE LATE PRESIDENT GURSEL IN 1963. HE NEXT SERVED AS
NO. 2 IN TURKEY'S MISSION TO THE OECD, 1965-71. HE TOOK UP
HIS PRESENT DUTIES AS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR IN 1971,
ADDING TO THEM IN 1972 THE DIRECTORSHIP OF THE PRIME MINISTRY'S
PRESS AND INFORMATION OFFICE.

C. AKBIL HAS BEEN DIVORCED, AND HAS REMARRIED. HIS PRESENT
WIFE, FATMA, IS AN EXPERT ON TURKISH FABRICS AND IS WRITING
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A BOOK ON THE SUBJECT. A CHARMING LADY, SHE RECEIVED SOME

EDUCATION IN TEXTILES IN ENGLAND AND SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH.
HE HAS A HOBBY OF COLLECTING ANTIQUES AND IS AN EXPERT ON ANTIQUE
ORIENTAL RUGS AND SILVER. HE IS FLUENT IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH.

D. AKBIL HAS BEEN A CAPABLE AND EFFECTIVE PRESS SPOKESMAN.
HE HAS EXCELLENT RAPPORT WITH TURKISH AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS AND
IS RESPECTED BY THE ANKARA PRESS CORPS. HE HAS GENERALLY ENDURED
WITH GRACE THE USUAL FRUSTRATIONS OF A PRESS OFFICER, BUT AT LEAST ON
ONE OCCASION WAS REPORTED TO HAVE OFFERED HIS RESIGNATION
BECAUSE HIS SUPERIORS IN THE MINISTRY DID NOT KEEP HIM
ADEQUATELY INFORMED.

E. AKBIL IS PRO-U.S. AND IN THE PAST HAS BEEN COOPERATIVE
WITH THIS EMBASSY AND USIS. HE ENJOYS THE COMPANY OF AMERICANS
AND HAS PLEASANT MEMORIES OF HIS SERVICE IN WASHINGTON. WE
BELIEVE EMBASSY ROME WILL FIND HIM A USEFUL ADDITION TO THE
ROME DIPLOMATIC CORPS.
FRANCIS

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